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OFFENSIVE AND CONDEMNABLE: ASSAM CM ON YUNUS' COMMENTS

Muhammad Yunus' comments on northeastern states kicks up a row, with Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma calling it "strongly condemnable"

YUNUS HAD URGED CHINESE COOPERATION

Calling Bangladesh the "only guardian of the ocean" in the Northeastern region, Yunus had urged China to extend its economic influence to his country, mentioning that India's seven sisters being landlocked is an opportunity. Yunus apparently made the comment during his recent four-day visit to China. A video of it surfaced on social media and led to furore

'B'DESH INVITING CHINA TO ENCIRCLE INDIA'

- Former Manipur CM N Biren Singh also joined in, accusing the neighbouring country of using the region as a strategic pawn
- Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said the attitude of Bangladesh government is "very dangerous for the security of our North East region." "Bangladesh is inviting China to encircle India." | **P10**

20 km

IS THE WIDTH OF SILIGURI CORRIDOR, ALSO CALLED THE 'CHICKEN'S NECK'

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

SC's conscience shocked over '21 UP demolitions

Orders ₹10 L relief to all petitioners in 6 wks

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

THE Prayagraj Development Authority in Uttar Pradesh was at the receiving end of the Supreme Court's wrath on Tuesday, as it slammed the "inhumane and illegal" demolition of houses of six individuals in 2021, saying it had shocked its conscience.

The court directed it to pay a compensation of ₹10 lakh each to the six individuals within six weeks, after the appellants said they did not have the means to rebuild their homes. "These cases shock our conscience," the court said.

Warning it for flouting the due process of law, a two-judge bench comprising justice Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan, said, "The Prayagraj Development Authority must remember that the right to shelter is also an integral part of Article 21 of the Constitution."

The court's whiplash came after hearing a joint plea by advocate Zulfiqar Haider, professor Ali Ahmed and others whose houses were demolished. The appellants approached the top court after their plea to stop the demolition was rejected by the high court.

Various other states have also flouted the court's earlier ruling barring illegal demolition of houses without following the rule of law.

In the Prayagraj case, showcause notices were first issued in 2020, and pasted on the six houses the same day. On January 8, 2021, a demolition notice was pasted on the same houses but not sent by registered post. "The first registered post communication was sent on March 1, 2021, received on March 6, 2021, and the demolition was carried out the next day, leaving the appellants with no opportunity to appeal under Section 27(2) of the UP Urban Planning and Development Act, 1973," the bench observed.

USTR lights into India ahead of tariff rollout

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

AHEAD of the expected rollout of reciprocal tariffs on April 2, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) raised concerns over India's trade policies.

In its 2025 National Trade Estimate (NTE) Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, the USTR cited India's high tariffs, restrictive digital trade rules, weak intellectual property enforcement, and unfair procurement practices as key obstacles for US businesses.

The 397-page report devotes 15 pages to highlight the tariff and non-tariff barriers that skew trade in India's favour. It says India's average MFN (most-favoured-nation) applied tariff rate of 17% in 2023 was the highest among major economies, with agricultural products averaging 39%.

The report accuses India of keeping high tariffs on a wide range of goods, including vegetable oils (45%); apples, corn, and motorcycles (50%); automobiles and flowers (60%); natural rubber (70%); coffee, raisins, and walnuts (100%); and alcoholic beverages (150%). In addition, India maintains high basic customs duties on drug formulations, including life-saving drugs, it notes.

USTR alleges India's high tariff rates present a big barrier to trade in other agriculture and processed foods such as poultry, potatoes, citrus, almonds, pecans, apples, grapes, canned peaches, chocolate, cookies, frozen French fries, and other prepared foods used in fast-food restaurants.

The report cites other non-tariff barriers as well such as quality control measures, and local procurement conditions for manufacturing in India.

The USTR has also flagged India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act for restricting cross-border data transfers and mandating data localisation.

US president Donald Trump on Monday reiterated that the reciprocal tax would be imposed on all countries without any exception.

MSP, FARM SUBSIDY DISTORT GLOBAL PRICES

The report highlights India's agricultural subsidies, particularly the MSP system for rice and wheat crops, claiming that these distort global prices and put US farmers at a great disadvantage

DEADLY BLAST

Debris of a firecracker warehouse after a blast in Gujarat's Banaskantha district on Tuesday that killed at least 21 people | PTI | **P10**

Now, Karnataka govt hikes diesel price by ₹2 per litre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

AFTER increasing milk prices, power tariff, and bus and Metro fares, the state government has now increased the price of diesel by Rs 2 a litre. This will come into effect from Tuesday.

According to a press release, the sales tax on diesel has been increased from 18.4% to 21.17% with immediate effect. With this, the price of diesel will go up to Rs 91.02 per litre in the state. The government, however, defended its decision, claiming that even after this hike, the price of diesel in Karnataka will continue to be lower than neighbouring states.

The sales tax on diesel was 24% prior to November 2021 and the price per litre was Rs 92.03. In June last, the state government issued a notification revising the diesel tax to 18.44%. The hike is likely to have its impact on other sectors. The transport corporations will have to spend more on diesel purchases. **P4**

Sparks to fly as Lok Sabha debates Waqf bill

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

SETTING the stage for a major showdown between the government and the Opposition, the Lok Sabha will take up the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill for discussion and passage on Wednesday, with an eight-hour-long debate allocated for its deliberation.

While the government is determined to push the bill through, the Opposition condemned it and called it "unconstitutional". The government requires a simple majority of 272 votes, which should be smooth for the NDA with 293 MPs. Major BJP allies like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Janata Dal (United), and Chirag Paswan-led LJP (Ramvilas), who had initial reservations, have now extended support after the joint parliamentary committee adopted some of their suggestions. The BJP has 240 MPs, JD(U) 12, and TDP 16. The BJP and several Opposition parties have issued whips for their MPs to be present in the House for the next three days.

Despite the numbers favoring the BJP, the Opposition has vowed to fight the bill. After a meeting of INDIA bloc leaders, Congress MP K C Venugopal said, "This bill is fundamentally against Constitutional provisions. We are going to oppose this bill." CPI(M) MP John Brittas said they would fight tooth and nail and seek a division of votes while coordinating with parties like YSRCP and Biju Janata Dal.

The Congress and other INDIA bloc members walked out of the Lok Sabha's business advisory committee meeting, accusing the government of stifling their voice.

Minorities and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said Speaker Om Birla chaired the meeting and agreed on an eight-hour debate, extendable based on the House's consensus. However, the Opposition had demanded 12 hours.

OPPN TO DEMAND DIVISION OF VOTES DURING PASSAGE

The opposition INDIA bloc on Tuesday unanimously decided to participate in the debate on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and seek a division of votes during its passage. The decision was arrived at a meeting attended by all Opposition | **P9**

Tax on parking areas in city to be revised

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

BRUHAT Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has proposed to revise the tax on parking areas in residential and commercial buildings. The palike issued a draft notification on Sunday, inviting objections, if any, within seven days from owners of residential and commercial buildings.

According to the notification, for parking areas of around 150 sqft in residential buildings, the owners have to pay Rs 600 per year, and for non-residential buildings, ₹1,125 per year.

BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said this decision was taken as there were requests from several quarters for reduction of tax on parking areas based on 'Unit Area Value', especially in non-residential areas. "The tax based on Unit Area Value in non-residential areas was 50% and the owners were paying more. Now under the new draft, tax rates will be reduced," said Girinath.

An official said, the tax rates for parking areas earlier were based on zonal calculation. This resulted in disparity and ended up in payment of nearly 50% of taxes on parking areas. Hence, BBMP proposed a uniform and standardised system. Owners of residential buildings paid 25% along with property tax and the proposed move would benefit owners of both residential and commercial buildings. **P2**

Don in mind, India and China mark 75th year of diplomatic ties

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

UNDER the shadow of the reciprocal tariffs set to be imposed by US President Donald Trump on April 2, India and China on Tuesday sought to work together as they marked the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his letter to President Droupadi Murmu, said bilateral ties should resemble a "dragon-elephant tango".

Responding to a letter from Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that advancing bilateral relations would enhance global stability and prosperity, while supporting the emergence of a multi-polar world. Modi noted that India and China are two ancient civilizations that have shaped human history, and it's their responsibility to promote peace and development. "Progress in our bilateral relations will contribute not only to global stability and prosperity but also to the emergence of a multi-polar world," Modi said.

"The development of China-India relations demonstrates it is the right choice for China and India to be partners of mutual achievement," Xi said in a letter to President Murmu.

READY TO STEP UP IMPORTS: ENVOY

Ahead of the US tariffs from April 2, China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, said, "We are willing to work with India to enhance cooperation in trade and to import more Indian products"

EXPRESS READ

German tourist raped inside car in Hyderabad, 1 held

Hyderabad: A 25-year-old German woman, touring Hyderabad, was raped inside a car in Mamidipally on Monday. The incident came to light on Tuesday when the victim lodged a police complaint. The accused, Mohammed Abdul Aslam, was arrested on Tuesday | **P5**

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
POLICE FLAG DAY
2nd April, 2025
Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
The day when we honour and salute our brave policemen for their selfless service, courage, valour and dedication
Police Flag Day
Sri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
Tributes to the unwavering dedication to duty of our Police
Chief Guest
Sri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Presided By
Dr. G. Parameshwara
Hon'ble Home Minister
Date: 02.04.2025, Wednesday Time: 8.00 AM
Venue: K.S.R.P. Parade Ground, Koramangala, Bengaluru
KARNATAKA STATE POLICE
POLICE FLAG DAY
02.04.2025
Buy a Police Flag
and Contribute to the Police Welfare Fund
₹ 100, ₹ 500, ₹ 1000
Dr. G. Parameshwara
Hon'ble Home Minister participated in the programme of the department.
As is enshrined in our Constitution, to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions. The National Flag and the National Anthem is the -Fundamental Duty of every citizen of the country.
karnataka information
Department of Information and Public Relations